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ORNAMENT, PROBABLY BY AGOSTINO VENEZIANO
ITALIAN SCHOOL, XVI CENTURY

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Front Cover Illustration: Ornament, Probably by Agostino Veneziano, Italian School, XVI Century . . .	133
Eighth-Century Arabic Woodcarvings A Gift of Russian Icons	134
An Early Short Sword	138
Plants, Patterns, and Knowledge . . .	139
Ornament in Near Eastern Art	141
Notes	145
Honor Conferred on the Director— Paintings by Living American Artists— A Gift of Fans—Address by the Presi- dent—Designs on a Punch Bowl	
Joseph Breck, 1885-1933	147

EIGHTH-CENTURY ARABIC WOODCARVINGS

In 1931 the Museum was fortunate in obtaining a rare and important Arabic woodcarving of the eighth century,¹ found in the ruins of Takrit in Mesopotamia. Recently a group of fourteen carved wooden panels from the same site has been acquired, augmenting considerably the Museum's hitherto inadequate representation of early Arabic woodcarvings. The two most interesting of these, described in this article, are shown this month in the Room of Recent

¹ M. S. Dimand, *BULLETIN*, vol. XXVI (1931), pp. 271-275.

Accessions; the others are available to students.

The decoration of the panels consists chiefly of geometrical interlacings and vine scrolls. One of the largest and finest, a square panel illustrated herewith, shows a highly elaborate design of vine scrolls and acanthus palmettes within compartments. Interlacing bands frame a large circular compartment in the center and four smaller ones in the corners. Within the large circle are two interlaced triangles inclosing a large central medallion and surrounded by six smaller medallions. All the compartments and the central medallion are filled with vine scrolls bearing leaves, among which the trefoiled ones are most prominent. The six smaller medallions contain acanthus palmettes, and this motive is also used as a border design of the central medallion. Four-petaled rosettes border the whole panel and the corner compartments.

The other noteworthy panel exhibited has a very fine design, which is related to that of a woodcarving in the Arab Museum in Cairo. Our panel is divided into three rectangular sections. The central one contains a half circular compartment inclosing five small circular medallions flanked by palmettes combined with highly stylized, almost obscure wing palmettes reminiscent of Sasanian art. In the other two compartments is a grapevine within an arch. Along the top of the panel is a battle-ment ornament, a survival from ancient Oriental art. The panel in Cairo is divided into seven rectangular compartments, the main decoration of which consists of the vine scroll with trefoiled leaves within arches or in combination with Sasanian wing motives.

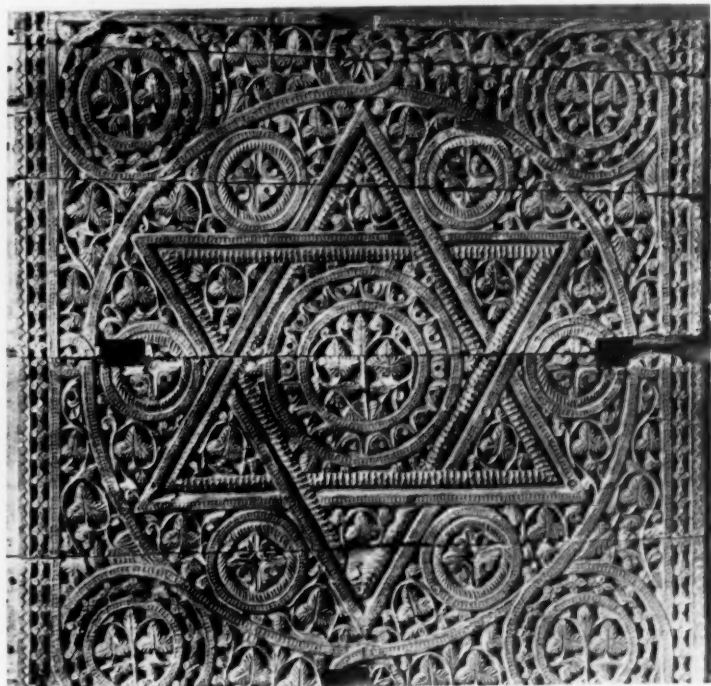
The ornament of our woodcarvings is characteristic of Islamic art under the Omayyads, who erected several important monuments in the Syrian desert, among them the Mshatta palace,² the façade of which is now in Berlin. The elaborate vine ornament and other motives of our large panel from Takrit recall the decoration of this façade. The Omayyad style, which pre-

² J. Strzygowski, *Jahrbuch der Königlichen preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. 25 (1904), pp. 225-373.

veiled during the eighth century in Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, was based on traditions of East Christian and Sasanian art; for instance, it retained the vine ornament favored by Christian artists. The Arabs after adopting the old designs stylized them, creating new and effective patterns in which the floral motives mingled with geometrical ones. This is true of our

scriptions at the top and bottom of this panel leave no doubt that it should be assigned to the eighth century. In the decoration, cut in low relief, our panels resemble so closely the one in Cairo that they must be contemporary with it and, like it, Mesopotamian in origin. Therefore they also can be assigned to the eighth century.

M. S. DIMAND.



CARVED TEAKWOOD PANEL, ARABIC, VIII CENTURY

panels from Takrit and of the famous prayer pulpit in the mosque of Kairwan,³ a work of the Baghdad school of woodcarving. To this school I am inclined to attribute the panel in Cairo. This panel gives us an important clue for the dating of all the early woodcarvings from Mesopotamia, for, although certain Omayyad monuments have been wrongly attributed to the pre-Islamic era because of the traditional character of the ornament, the Kufic in-

³ M. S. Dimand, *op. cit.*, fig. 3; J. Strzygowski, *Altai-Iran und Völkerwanderung*, figs. 71, 165-170, pl. X.

A GIFT OF RUSSIAN ICONS

Mrs. Henry Morgenthau has given to the Museum a group of interesting icons of Byzantine and Russian workmanship, which she collected in the Near East. These little panels, shown in the Room of Recent Accessions, are very welcome additions to our collection both intrinsically and as typifications of a most important branch of Christian European painting which has been scantily represented here hitherto. It is only since the war that opportunities have occurred to acquire in New York works of this

sort. We had already made a start—Miss Lizzie Bliss bequeathed to us in 1931 three remarkable Byzantine panels, and from our colleague Stephen Grancsay we have received a Russian painting of the seven-

onewhose slight acquaintance with the matter consists only of casual book knowledge and an examination of the icons circulated by the American Russian Institute and exhibited in this Museum in 1931, any pro-



CALENDAR OF SAINTS AND FESTIVALS—AUGUST
RUSSIAN SCHOOL, XVI OR XVII CENTURY

teenth century. To this small number we are now able to add, thanks to Mrs. Morgenthau's generosity, these twenty examples.

The writer is in no position to make any authoritative statements about the dates and schools of Byzantine and Russian paintings. The subject is very complicated, even to those who specialize in it, and from

nouncement would be mere impertinence. He can only say therefore that two of the works at least appear to him to be Byzantine—the early *Virgin and Child*,¹ the style of which would indicate that it dates from the fourteenth or early fifteenth century, and the *Virgin with hands upraised* in

¹ Tempera on wood; h. 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ in., w. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

prayer.² The latter is also old but to guess its date is difficult, as the surface is obscured by dirt and smoke.

Of the Russian pictures the most interesting are the series of twelve³ with their

rative beauty of the Russian style in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If one in imagination enlarges these tiny figures to the size of life and fancies the whole panel to be the section of a great wall in a dimly lit



CALENDAR OF SAINTS AND FESTIVALS—SEPTEMBER
RUSSIAN SCHOOL, XVI OR XVII CENTURY

original repoussé silver frames. The whole forms a calendar of the saints and festivals to which each day of the year is sacred. Though miniature-like in scale these panels exemplify admirably the richness and deco-

² Tempera on wood; h. 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., w. 10 in.

³ Tempera on wood; each, h. 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ in., w. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

church one arrives at some idea of the splendid and impressive powers of this art.

There remain six other works—two little triptychs⁴ and a panel with the Dormition

⁴ Tempera on wood. Last Judgment and Scenes from the Life of Christ: center panel, h. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., w. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.; left wing, h. 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ in., w. 5 in.; right wing, h. 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ in., w. 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. Deesis with

of the Virgin⁸ which show in parts the influence of Western art and three heads⁹ from a *deesis* of the seventeenth century. The triptychs are rather late—of the early eighteenth century probably; the Dormition is earlier. They may be products of those Greco-Italian workshops which, from Italy or the Greek Islands, exported their wares to Russia and to the Christians in the Near East.

BRYSON BURROUGHS.

AN EARLY SHORT SWORD

As there are comparatively few objects of the fourteenth century in the Museum, every acquisition which shows the art of this period is welcome. In studying the ac-

Our weapon, which we have called a short sword, might be considered a long dagger, for a characteristic of the development of the dagger in the second half of the fourteenth century was the lengthening of its blade, and this blade measures just over 20 inches, the over-all length being 27¼ inches. It is double-edged, with a groove on either side running from the guard to below the center. The blade and hilt are forged in one piece, the pommel forming a ring. The hilt plaques comprise five pieces of ivy root, between each of which and the tang is a copper fillet. These fillets project beyond the edge of the ivy-root plaques, which have shrunk. Two plaques cover either side of the grip, the upper ones being made in one piece with the pommel; the fifth piece forms



SHORT SWORD, SWISS, XIV CENTURY

tivities of this century by means of objects exhibited here, the short sword lately purchased and now exhibited in the Room of Recent Accessions would be especially valuable. It shows the work of a skillful artisan in steel, the employment of a suitable hard wood for the hilt, and appropriate decoration of the hilt by the simple means of studding it effectively with copper ringlets. The sword gives one an excellent impression of the workmanship of the objects supplied to the middle-class townsman of the fourteenth century for his daily use. In those desolate days of the Hundred Years' War everyone needed a weapon. In time of peace, too, such short swords were frequently carried by civilians, often worn through a slit in the purse, which was suspended from the waist belt.

Saints George and Demetrius of Thessalonica; center panel, h. 9⅜ in., w. 5⅞ in.; wings, each, h. 7⅞ in., w. 3 in.

⁸ Tempera on wood; h. 13½ in., w. 11 in.

⁹ Tempera on wood. Christ, h. 8⅜ in., w. 7⅞ in. Virgin, h. 8⅜ in., w. 7¼ in. Saint John, h. 8⅜ in., w. 7⅞ in.

the keel-shaped guard. These five plaques are secured by means of copper thimbles, large and small, which pass through the tang. Numerous small rings of copper stud the surface of the hilt. The pommel has a perforation three-quarters of an inch in diameter lined with a copper thimble. Through this perforation there undoubtedly passed a thong suspended from the shoulder or waist belt or merely from the wrist, or a chain attached to the breastplate. The chain arrangement may be seen in a splendid fourteenth-century woodcarving of Saint George and the Dragon (Gallery H 6, Case 124) from the Stefanskirche in Vienna. Either method enabled the wearer to recover the sword quickly if it were dislodged from his grasp. The thong would also have made it possible to use a lance while the sword was suspended from the wrist.

Some of the characteristics of our sword appear also in daggers in this Museum.¹ At

¹ Bashford Dean, *Catalogue of European Daggers* (Metropolitan Museum).

the base of the guard on one side is the end of an iron stud and on the opposite side a hole for a similar stud. These pegs secured a metal cap such as may be seen in Swiss daggers with keel-shaped guards and pommels. Fillets and hollow bronze thimble rivets similar to those used in the hilt may be seen in a fourteenth-century basildard and in several cinquedeas in the Museum collection. A fifteenth-century roundel dagger in the Reubell Collection has its hilt plaques inlaid, like our sword, with small brass rings in groups of five.

mels.² However, the writer has found neither an actual specimen nor a contemporary representation of a sword with both ring pommel and keel guard, such as occur in our sword. Although the sword is said to have been found in Germany in the marshes along the Middle Rhine, it is typically Swiss in style. From this form developed the Swiss dagger of the sixteenth century, with sheath mounting in bronze, gilded, pierced, and chased, familiar to us from designs by Aldegrever, Dürer, and Holbein.

STEPHEN V. GRANCSAY.



WOODCUT BY HANS WEIDITZ FROM THE
BRUNFELS HERBAL, 1530

Our acquisition is of particular interest in several respects. The uniform, deep rust over the surface of the blade indicates that the sword must have been long buried, but it is still solid and practically intact, an unusual condition for an excavated object of this kind. The hilt plaques are remarkably well preserved, only a small section of the pommel having been restored with sealing wax before the sword was purchased. A European ring pommel sword with its hilt plaques intact is possibly unique, although the ring pommel itself is, of course, universal. In this Museum are several Chinese and Japanese ring pommels of the sixth century A.D., and in the Kreuzenstein Castle near Vienna are a number of Roman and mediæval swords and daggers with ring pom-

PLANTS, PATTERNS, AND KNOWLEDGE

Thanks to the most kind coöperation of H. A. Elsberg and of The New York Botanical Garden it has been possible for the Department of Prints of the Museum to organize in its four smaller galleries on the second floor of Wing K an exhibition illustrating the use of plant forms in engraved and drawn pattern design from the time of the Renaissance down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. A group of the older botany books of especial interest from their more purely artistic aspects is included in the exhibition.

² J. Schwietering, *Zeitschrift für historische Waffenkunde*, vol. VIII (1919), pp. 240-243.

On the walls of the first two galleries are to be seen a group of charming and representative pattern designs, beginning with the work of such important fifteenth-century artists as the Master E S, the Master W^W, and Israhel van Meckenem, and coming on down to typical specimens of the better-known French designers of the eighteenth century. The third gallery contains a varied and interesting group of designs and *mises en carte* for textiles, a number of which are accompanied by specimens of the textiles actually woven from them. Among the more interesting of these may be especially mentioned the original cartoon for Philippe de Lasalle's famous design of the Panier fleuri and, thanks to Mr. Elsberg, a sample of the tissue woven from it. In the fourth gallery is a group of French and German designs of the eighteenth century, most of them for needlework, which is dominated by the genius of Jean Pillement, that most wayward and learned and charming of minor masters.

In the floor cases in the four galleries there has been displayed a group of herbals and botanies from the collections of The New York Botanical Garden and from the Library and Print Room of the Museum itself. These books are not laid out in any very definite chronological or subject sequence, the principal idea in arranging the cases having been to produce as pleasant an effect as possible.

At least since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans there have always been men and women who have derived great pleasure from the collection and study of plants and flowers, and the making of gardens is one of the oldest avocations of which we have record—for have we not been solemnly assured by the Lord Chancellor Bacon that "God Almighty first planted a garden"? The lore of plants has always been sadly tangled, sentiment, utility, medicine, pure science, the dichotomy of classification schemes, colors, names, odors ("sounds and sweet airs"), memories, and nostalgias being inextricably mixed in such a way as to make the subject one which the average man or woman is unable to cope with, the sun shining, except with shears and trowel and bast. But when winter comes and the

pleasant hours of life are those before the fire, then the bookish minded have found a way in which to carry their gardens of memory and of anticipation indoors, to be enjoyed by the flicker of candlelight. No one has ever been able to say which were the real and which were the phantom flowers, those that grow in gardens, those that live in poets' lines, or those that are to be found within the covers of the herbals.

Being all tangled up in this way there are few subjects which can more richly repay interest and acquaintance than the literature of botany. Here is a subject matter the material for which has always been easily available, that is charming in itself, that has many uses, that appeals to eye and nose and memory, and that is apt to set anyone conundrums to guess. As the Abbot of Brunn demonstrated, it provides for the thinking man as serious an avenue for exalted thought about the biological laws of life as any more recondite and displeasing subject, for the Mendelian theory was worked out in a garden of peas. To the historian of thought the array of herbals and botanies contains as good a cross section for study as can be desired. In them he will discover not only how long it took men to realize the necessity for a system of scientific classification, but the various manners in which they groped for a solution of the problem and the imposing edifice of thought that has been erected with the aid of such systems as have been worked out. Some of the earliest botanists grouped their plants by size, others arranged them in alphabetical order, and medicinal properties were also used. It was a botanist who first discerned the difference between a genus and a species, and botanists were among the first to think scientifically about the mysteries of reproduction and heredity. The history of the creation of a terminology suitable for accurate description is also here written out at length, and it is not without its curious interest that the nephew and aptest pupil of Jeremy Bentham should on the basis of his uncle's theory of fictions have become one of the greatest of all descriptive botanists.

From another point of view, perhaps more closely allied to the superficial pur-

poses of an art museum, the old herbals and botanies are of the greatest possible interest, for in their illustrations one can see not only the growth of skill in delineation, but the development of the ability to see under pressure of an idea. As those who know the word *apperception* are aware the human being is apt to see and consciously to record only such things as he is looking for; and this fundamental fact is most perfectly demonstrated in the pages of the botanies. More than that, one can there observe how closely related are representation and acquaintance or thought. As a man represents a thing so he knows it—a fact here made manifest in a restricted field of purely objective interests and therefore even more true in unrestricted fields of subjective values. Thus a matter that the botanical historian has to cope with in his science throws light upon the history and understanding of art. Still more, the history of botanical illustration when coupled with the history of the processes of representation shows how men's thinking is limited by their techniques of picture making—Oscar Wilde's witty paradox that nature copies art becomes basically true and of the most profound import. Until Hans Weiditz illustrated the Brunfels Herbal of 1530 there were no cheap and easily communicable accurate pictures of flowers and plants. The innovation was so startling that Brunfels has been called "the restorer of the science [of botany] in Europe"—for those who used his book gave him the credit that belonged to another man. Then in 1592 there came another innovation of the most revolutionary kind. Up to that time the woodcut had been the accepted technique of botanical illustration, but in that year Fabio Colonna of Naples published his little book called *Phytobasanos*, in which he for the first time in botanical history made use of etched plates for his illustrations, thus introducing a much more nervously delicate and accurate means of representation. In his second book, the *Ekphrasis* of 1616, which was similarly illustrated, he for the first time indicated the true nature of genera.

From that time on the progress of botany has kept in step with the developments of the copperplate techniques, which have

been to an extraordinary extent the vehicles of thought. Would one see the greatest triumphs of color printing one must go to the botanies that accompanied the development and popularization of the Linnaean system.

Thus the history of botany and the books and pictures in which it is preserved may be seen to throw light not only upon the development of scientific thought but upon many of the more difficult and fundamental relationships between art and life.

WILLIAM M. IVINS, JR.

ORNAMENT IN NEAR EASTERN ART

The evolution of ornament in the Near East presents a most interesting chapter in the history of Oriental civilizations. Spiritual and political factors were the driving forces in the formation of new styles in ornament. Some of these factors were of internal origin, some of external, in the latter case coming both from settled civilizations and from nomadic cultures. The importance of the nomadic element in the evolution of ornament has not hitherto been sufficiently emphasized. In general the plant ornament so characteristic of all Near Eastern countries with settled civilizations was not employed by the nomads. The ornament created by them was geometric, for the most part of an abstract nature. A realization of the existence of these two systems of ornament—the floral and the abstract—will help to correct many misconceptions regarding the ornament of the Near East.

There are indications that plant ornament in the Near East was of religious origin. Numerous representations of sacred trees in Babylonian and Assyrian art are undoubtedly derived from the date palm, which at an early period was worshiped as the tree of life, a symbol of fertility. In transforming the palm tree into a symbol, Mesopotamian artists stylized it more and more until they produced the highly decorative tree of Assyrian reliefs. Usually the upright trunk ends in a palmette, a schematic rendering of the plumose foliage of the date palm, and is framed by a series of

smaller palmettes connected by bands. Primarily a symbol as part of the sacred tree, the palmette was also extensively used for purely decorative purposes, often alternating with other motives such as pine cones, lotus flowers, and pomegranates. Arched bands, held together with clasps, connected the motives and established the continuity of the design. Adopted by the Phoenicians, Persians, and Greeks, the palmette became one of the most essential ele-

Oriental art. The Greek conception of the world was anthropocentric, and as a result Hellenistic ornament was based on the principle of organic vitality and was essentially naturalistic. Frequently, as in Bactria and Parthia, Hellenistic tendencies mixed with Oriental traditions formed a hybrid style different from that of Western Hellenism.

A strong reaction against Hellenism and naturalistic art began in the first century



PLATE WITH NATURALISTIC DESIGN SHOWING CHINESE INFLUENCE
PERSIAN, XIV CENTURY

ments of Near Eastern decoration, changing according to locality and appearing in many varieties. The artistic principles followed by Mesopotamian artists were rhythmic repetition and symmetry, and these principles remain characteristic to a certain extent of all the plant ornament of the Near East.

The political changes which followed the conquests of Alexander the Great confronted the Oriental with ideas and conceptions of life vastly different from his own. As it spread over the Near and the Middle East, reaching even the Far East, the influence of Hellenism introduced decorative principles diametrically opposed to those of

A.D. under the Iranian Parthians. This reaction was fostered under the powerful dynasty of the Sasanids, who have to be credited with developing a new style of plant ornament in which the alien naturalistic tendencies were gradually replaced by traditional principles of rhythmic repetition and symmetry. The palmette again became the chief motive, and as in Babylonian and earlier Persian art palmettes were connected by clasped bands in a purely decorative fashion. New varieties, however, of composite nature, made their appearance in Sasanian ornament. The full palmette was often split into half-palmettes, which frequently merged with the "stem," now geometrized

and devoid of all organic characteristics.

In considering the plant ornament of the Near and the Middle East, one cannot disregard the art of India, which influenced, and was influenced by, the art of neighboring countries. Indian plant ornament was rooted in the ancient worship of nature spirits. The chief motive was the lotus plant, the symbol of life-giving waters, and in representing it in whole or in part Indian artists followed traditional formulae. Lotus

The rise of Islam, the new religion founded by Muhammad,¹ marks a new chapter in the history of Near Eastern civilization. United by the spiritual force of Islam, the Arab tribes succeeded in conquering one country after another. Having little art of their own, they adopted the highly developed art of the countries they conquered. In the beginning, therefore, Islamic art and ornament were more or less a continuation of Coptic, Byzantine, Persian,



PLATE WITH HYACINTH DESIGN
TURKISH, END OF XVI CENTURY

flowers and leaves spring from various symbols of water, such as a full vase, the jaws of a *makara* (water monster) and the mouth or navel of a *yakṣa* (deity of vegetation and fertility). Indian artists stylized plant forms in a fashion which differs from that of other Near Eastern countries. In early Indian monuments dating from the second and first centuries B.C., the lotus was treated schematically or parts of it were combined into purely decorative devices. In later monuments, of the Mathurā and Amarāvati schools, the stylization of the lotus plant led to the creation of new pseudo-floral motives and abstract scrollwork, which had no resemblance to natural forms.

and Indian traditions. The Arabs were instinctively hostile to the representation of living beings and consequently to any ornament suggesting organic vitality. Inclined towards purely abstract thoughts, they favored geometric patterns.

The most characteristic ornament of the Islamic world is the arabesque, which, contrary to antiquated theories, is not floral but abstract in origin. It is composed of flowing curves, crossing and interlacing each other, and bears a variety of motives which may be called arabesque-palmettes. A product of gradual development, it did not ap-

¹ The Muhammadan era begins in A.D. 622, the year of Muhammad's flight to Medina.

pear in the form familiar to all of us until the twelfth century. Elements of the true arabesque are found, however, in Mesopotamia under the Abbasid dynasty as early as the ninth century. The ornament of that period reveals two styles, one derived from the plant ornament of East Christian and Sasanian art, the other purely abstract, of a kind unknown in the Near East in the pre-Islamic era. The characteristic elements of the latter style are the geometrical scroll and pseudo-palmette devices, which reveal many features of the true arabesque. This new style, which revolutionized Islamic ornament, was introduced into Mesopotamia by the Turkish nomads, hired in great numbers by the caliphs as their bodyguards. It may be traced back to the art of the Scytho-Sarmatian nomads of Central Asia.

The development of the arabesque received a fresh stimulus in the eleventh century through the arrival of Turkish Seljuks, also nomads from Central Asia, who brought with them a new repertoire of abstract forms, which were in time incorporated into the true arabesque. Although the arabesque underwent changes which varied with the period and the locality, it preserved its main characteristics, which were determined by geometrical formulae and not by organic laws. Through centuries the Muhammadan world clung to the arabesque almost as tenaciously as it did to its religion.

Although the vast Muhammadan world comprised several races and countries, there developed an Islamic civilization and art common to them all. Persia, however, was an exception, for even the adoption of Islam did not deprive it of its strong national feeling, which was based on traditions of the Achaemenian and Sasanian eras. Persia accordingly developed ornamental forms dif-

ferent from those of other Muhammadan provinces. In the Islamic period the formalized plant ornament of Sasanian art continued to be used side by side with the abstract arabesque. As may be seen in Persian art of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the scrolls and stylized trees, used as a background for figure subjects, animals, and writing, bear a variety of leaves and palmettes, three- or five-petaled, which form a dense pattern. Persian plant ornament of the Seljuk era influenced even the arabesque itself, giving to certain parts of it the appearance of floral petals.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century a great change in the rendering of the plant ornament took place. This change was due to naturalizing tendencies introduced by the Mongols, who conquered a great portion of the Near and the Middle East. Through the Mongols Persian artists became acquainted with the Chinese floral decoration of the Sung period. The stylized plant motives were replaced by naturalistic foliage, peonies, and lotus flowers, which from then on became an integral part of Persian decoration.

These naturalizing tendencies continued through the fifteenth century, when under the Timurids new Chinese influences arrived, changing completely the aspect of Persian plant ornament and to a certain extent that of the rest of Islam. Persia assimilated these Chinese elements and created a new plant ornament, which reached its height in the sixteenth century under the rule of the Safavid dynasty. The floral scroll and the palmette are the principal elements of this floral decoration, which reveals a great variety of patterns and motives familiar to us from Persian rugs and textiles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The floral scrolls, forming gracefully flowing curves, bear leaves, ro-



WOODCARVING WITH ARABESQUE
PATTERN, EGYPTO-ARABIC
XIII CENTURY

settes, and palmettes of various sizes and shapes. The intricate patterns are frequently interlaced with arabesques and intertwined with undulating cloud bands, borrowed from China. In the formation of the floral scrolls Persian artists followed certain systems. Either the scrolls issue from the center, curving in spirals and sending off several shoots, or they run from end to end. Often they form geometrical compartments, in which are placed the palmettes varying in size and degree of stylization according to locality. In certain centers, as for instance those in Eastern Persia, naturalizing tendencies were stronger than in others, but nevertheless they are always subordinated to the decorative style of Islamic art. The

floral design forms an all-over pattern with motives running in various directions, thus stopping any organic movement which the wavy floral scroll might suggest.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century the plant ornament of Persia, Turkey, and India began to borrow motives from nature itself. The rose, the tulip, the carnation, the hyacinth, the poppy, and other plants were now introduced into Near Eastern ornament. At first these floral motives were conventionalized, but with a growing tendency towards objective imitation of nature they became strongly naturalistic. This marks the decline of art in the Near East, due to decay of the creative spirit and to growing European influences. M. S. DIMAND.

NOTES

HONOR CONFERRED ON THE DIRECTOR. Herbert Eustis Winlock received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Yale University at the commencement exercises held on June 21.

PAINTINGS BY LIVING AMERICAN ARTISTS. In accordance with the Museum's interest in the work of contemporary painters three pictures have been purchased recently out of the George A. Hearn Fund and are shown this month in the Room of Recent Accessions. They are *My Son Sandy* by Alexander Brook, *Still Life with Striped Curtain* by Henry L. McFee, and *Girl in a White Blouse* by Raphael Soyer.

A GIFT OF FANS. The Museum has recently received as the gift of Mrs. Thomas Hunt an interesting collection of twenty fans,¹ seventeen of which are European and three Chinese. Outstanding among them is a rare printed fan made between 1797 and 1799, upon which appears a portrait of Napoleon. The leaf is a stipple engraving by Jean Godefroy, after a design by Chaudet, Fontaine, and Percier. Chaudet was respon-

sible for the portrait of Napoleon, the other two for the neoclassical ornament surrounding it. A fan of this description was presented to Madame Bonaparte by the city of Paris, at whose order it was made.²

Most of the European fans are of the first half of the nineteenth century. Among them may be mentioned an interesting example made in Paris, probably for the Spanish trade, which is decorated with an episode from Rossini's opera *The Barber of Seville*, accompanied by a part of the score. There is also a lithographed French fan made as a souvenir of the Paris Exposition universelle in 1855, ornamented with scenes of that early World's Fair. J. G. P.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT. At the opening session of the meeting of the American Association of Museums, held in Chicago, June 12-14, William Sloane Coffin spoke "For Museums of Art" in a symposium on *Museums in Contemporary Life*. Huger Elliott, Director of Educational Work, and James J. Rorimer, Associate Curator of Decorative Arts, also participated in the program of the meeting.

¹ Shown this month in the Recent Accessions Room.

² François Courboin, *Histoire illustrée de la gravure en France*, vol. II, no. 763.

DESIGNS ON A PUNCH BOWL. The source of the patterns used by Chinese artists upon porcelain decorated for the Western market has long been a matter of curiosity to collectors of Sino-Lowestoft ware.

The four stipple engravings of a set lately acquired by the Museum are identical in subject matter with the designs painted upon the exterior of a large punch bowl,¹ made and decorated in China about 1800, which is now on exhibition in Gallery M 7 of the American Wing. The engravings, which are all entitled *Bacchante*, are inscribed "Drawn by Lavinia, Countess of Spencer"

gained at the hands of their Oriental interpreter a decided sureness of drawing, as well as richness of color in terms of purple, pink, burnt umber, and green.

Lavinia Bingham, the daughter of the Earl of Lucan and the wife of the second Earl of Spencer, was well known in London as an amateur artist. She furnished Gillray, Bartolozzi, and Bovi with a variety of subjects for engravings. Her own portrait after the original by Sir Joshua Reynolds was engraved by Bartolozzi in 1787. She died June 8, 1831.

Marino Bovi, known also as Bova, was



BACCHANTE, DRAWN BY LAVINIA BINGHAM
AND ENGRAVED BY M. BOVI

and "Engraved and published by M. Bovi late Pupil of F. Bartolozzi R. A. 207 Piccadilly London, Jan. 1st 1792." In each example a reclining bacchante robed in classic draperies amuses the infant Bacchus with clusters of grapes or with music, or supports a cup to quench his thirst. In the painted rendering even the technique of the prints, which is a combination of stipple and line engraving, has been suggested. Fortunately, the figures upon the bowl have

born in Naples in 1758 and worked first as a pupil of Bartolozzi. Besides such characteristic subjects of the period as *Comfort*, *New Shoes*, and *Nice Supper*, drawn for him by the Countess of Spencer, he engraved the work of Angelica Kauffmann, G. B. Cipriani, Cosway, and others. He pleaded bankruptcy in 1805, and no record of his subsequent activity is known. Bovi's work has little artistic importance and is of interest to us chiefly because four of his engravings were copied by some unknown porcelain painter in China upon the punch bowl in the Museum's collection.

J. D.

¹ In the Sylmaris Collection, gift of George Coe Graves, 1931, acc. no. 31.102. For the description and history of the bowl see Ruth Ralston, *BULLETIN*, vol. XXVII (1932), p. 83.

JOSEPH BRECK

1885-1933

On the evening of August second, just as this number of the Bulletin was going to press, the Museum was shocked to receive word that Joseph Breck was dead. He had died suddenly and unexpectedly that afternoon while walking at Villars-sur-Ollon in Switzerland.

For twenty-one years in the service of the Museum, at first as an Assistant Curator in the Department of Decorative Arts, and later as Curator of that department, Director of The Cloisters, and Assistant and Acting Director of the Museum itself, Mr. Breck played an extremely important part in the development of its collections and its fabric. Ingenious, broadly learned, vitally interested in all of the Museum's activities, endowed with an amazing memory and great quickness of thought, Mr. Breck gave the utmost of his strength and intelligence to the institution in which he found both his life and his ambition. The Morgan Wing, the galleries on the second floors of Wings K and J, the galleries of mediaeval and Renaissance decorative arts, The Cloisters, and more recently the new hall of mediaeval tapestries are a standing testimony to his taste and knowledge in installation and arrangement. A skilled draftsman, knowing much of architecture and fully acquainted with the requirements and desires of the Museum, Mr. Breck was largely responsible for the plans for its future building and arrangement. As a collector for the Museum his activities ranged a field wider than those of any of his associates, covering for many years, with the sole exceptions of armor and European paintings and prints, the arts of Christian Europe, of the Muhammadan countries, and of Hindustan.

Of all the devoted servants the Museum has had, few if any have left a more decided mark of personality upon it. The loss that we have suffered through his death is as great as it is obvious.

WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN,
President

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Incorporated April 13, 1870, "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a Museum and library of art, of encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts, and the application of arts to manufacture and practical life, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and, to that end, of furnishing popular instruction."

LOCATION

MAIN BUILDING. Fifth Avenue at 82d Street. Buses 1-4 of the Fifth Avenue Coach Company pass the door. Madison Avenue cars one block east. Express station on East Side subway at Lexington Avenue and 86th Street. Station on Third Avenue elevated at 84th Street. Cross-town buses at 70th and 86th Streets.

BRANCH BUILDING. The Cloisters, 698 Fort Washington Avenue. Fifth Avenue Bus 4 (Northern Avenue) passes the entrance. Also reached by the Eighth Avenue subway to 190th Street-Overlook Terrace station. Take elevator to Fort Washington Avenue exit and walk south.

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MEMBERSHIP

BENEFACTORS, who contribute or devise	\$50,000
FELLOWS IN PERPETUITY, who contribute	5,000
FELLOWS FOR LIFE, who contribute	1,000
CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS, who pay annually	250
FELLOWSHIP MEMBERS, who pay annually	100
SUSTAINING MEMBERS, who pay annually	25
ANNUAL MEMBERS, who pay annually	10

PRIVILEGES—All Members are entitled to the following privileges:

A ticket admitting the Member and his family, and non-resident friends, on Mondays and Fridays.

Ten complimentary tickets a year, each of which admits the bearer once, on either Monday or Friday.

The services of the Museum Instructors free.

An invitation to any general reception given by the Trustees at the Museum for Members.

The BULLETIN and the Annual Report.

A set of all handbooks published for general distribution, upon request at the Museum.

Contributing, Fellowship, and Sustaining Members have, upon request, double the number of tickets to the Museum accorded to Annual Members; their families are included in the invitation to any general reception; and whenever their subscriptions in the aggregate amount to \$1,000 they shall be entitled to be elected Fellows for Life and to become members of the Corporation. For further particulars, address the Secretary.

ADMISSION

MUSEUM GALLERIES and THE CLOISTERS free except on Mondays and Fridays, when a fee of 25 cents is charged to all except Members and those holding special cards—students, teachers and pupils in the New York City public schools, and others. Free on legal holidays. Children under seven at the main building and under twelve at The Cloisters must be accompanied by an adult.

HOURS OF OPENING

MAIN BUILDING and THE CLOISTERS:	
Saturdays	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sundays	1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Other days	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Holidays, except Thanksgiving & Christmas	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thanksgiving	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Christmas	1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
The American Wing & The Cloisters close at dusk in winter.	
CAFETERIA:	
Saturdays	12 m. to 5:15 p.m.
Sundays	Closed.
Other days	12 m. to 4:45 p.m.
Holidays, except Thanksgiving & Christmas	12 m. to 5:15 p.m.
Thanksgiving	12 m. to 4:45 p.m.
Christmas	Closed.
LIBRARY. Gallery hours, except legal holidays and during the summer Saturdays from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays.	
MUSEUM EXTENSION OFFICE: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Sundays and legal holidays.	
PRINT ROOM and TEXTILE STUDY ROOM: Gallery hours, except Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and legal holidays.	

INSTRUCTORS

Members of the staff detailed for expert guidance at the Museum and at The Cloisters. Appointments should be made at the Museum through the Information Desk or, if possible, in advance by mail or telephone message to the Director of Educational Work. Free service to Members and to the teachers and students in the public schools of New York City; for others, a charge of \$1.00 an hour for from one to four persons and 25 cents a person for groups of five or more. Instructors also available for talks in the public schools.

PRIVILEGES AND PERMITS

For special privileges extended to teachers, pupils, and art students at the Museum and at The Cloisters, and for use of the Library, classrooms, study rooms, and lending collections, see special leaflets.

Requests for permits to copy and to photograph should be addressed to the Secretary. No permits are necessary for sketching and for taking snapshots with hand cameras. Permits are issued for all days except Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and legal holidays. See special leaflet.

INFORMATION DESK

At the 82d Street entrance to the main building. Questions answered; fees received; classes and lectures, copying, sketching, and guidance arranged for; and directions given.

PUBLICATIONS

The Museum publishes and sells handbooks, colorprints, photographs, and postcards, describing and illustrating objects in its collections. Sold at the Information Desk and through European agents. See special leaflets.

CAFETERIA

In the basement of the main building. Open for luncheon and afternoon tea daily, except Sundays and Christmas. Special groups and schools bringing lunches accommodated if notification is given in advance.

TELEPHONES

The Museum number is Rhinelander 4-7690; The Cloisters branch of the Museum, Washington Heights 7-2735.